1: Cohen E-4,5 (1956-1965) 1967 MS14 Kanuri MS14

tinual dereliction of some duty although outright malfeasance such as stealing can also bring swift and awesome retribution. For example, a young boy was beaten for continually omitting to gather grass for his father's horse. This is a skill that a boy should acquire by the age of six or eight, possibly nine at the very latest. When punishment occurs its severity is noted by all children within earshot, and thus the beating of one child of the village or ward serves notice on all that punishment is not just a matter of threats but may become a reality if limits are transgressed.

That such household learning soon becomes habitual can be seen any day in a Bornu village by watching children. Even a little girl of three and a half can accomplish tasks involving quite a lot of dexterity. One little girl of this age was passed a straw mat plate and separately given some paper clips. She neatly put the paper clips on the plate and began her own already advanced imitation of the quick, deft, jiggling movements associated with the sifting of ground-nut shells. None of her paper clips was dropped, and she soon passed the plate back saying, "Here are some sifted ground nuts."

Sometimes play takes in both sexes and is more complex than simple imitation like the one above. Thus for several days a large group of young children from the age of five through ten may organize a "wedding." The "bride" and "groom" are chosen as are the various kindred, the best man, the leading woman, etc. Care is taken to practice as many of the details of the adult virgin wedding ceremony as they can manage including even a mock impregnation, in this case with a small doll. Wedding foods in miniature are passed around to the adults who accept the mock food with a show of seriousness although they may comment on or question some detail of the ceremony carried out mistakenly or omitted by the children. Adults expressed satisfaction with this type of play and remarked on its instructive value for the children. Such play is related to an even more complex form called *mai-mai,* which is no longer practiced in Bornu. In playing *mai-mai* the young children in a village put on a pageant. They chose a king, nobles, servants, slaves, wives, gave titles to everyone, and behaved for several days in the guise of these socio-political roles. Mock battles were fought, slaves taken and justice meted out in a mock court. Seniority was established by age and consent. The organization was temporary like the "wedding" and disbanded after a few days. During periods when adults are out of the compound, away at a market, or working in the fields during the growing season, children often play house. The group gets together and appoints "fathers," "wives," and "children." The little children may actually cook for their "husbands" on such occasions and the couples go into a hut in the compound where sexual play is carried on. They are, however, soon called back to the larger group where it has been declared "morning" by another child who has announced the "morning prayers" signifying that night has passed. Boys are aware that such play should stop when they can ejaculate. From then on they are men; sex is a serious affair and unmarried girls are illegitimate objects of sexual intercourse. However such prepubescent sex derived from playing "house" is widespread, or to paraphrase one young informant, "Everyone does such things when they are young."

Boys especially, but girls as well, may also begin some religious instruction during their childhood. Although girls never leave home for this purpose, boys sometimes do after the age of six or seven. In some cases the teacher lives nearby

868 are transgressed.

868 857 Learning of adult skills is often accomplished through imitative play. A little girl of three and a half was passed a straw plate and, separately, some paper clips. She immediately put the paper clips on the plate as her mother would do in the preparation of food, and began her own approximation of the quick, deft, jiggling movement of sifting the shells of groundnuts. None of the paper-clips was dropped from the plate and she soon passed the plate back saying, "Here are some groundnuts."

857 867 Sometimes imitative play is more organized. A large group of children between the age of six to ten may organize a "wedding". One of the young boys is the groom and a bride is chosen, as are in-laws, best man, lead woman, etc. [864] Every detail of the adult virgin marriage ceremony is carried out, even to a mock impregnation, in this case a small doll. The wedding foods, in miniature, are passed around to the proper people, who accept the mock food with a show of seriousness. Adults thought this play was instructive and remarked that it was a good way for the children to learn the customs of the people.

794 793 Childhood is also the time of basic religious instruction which is more highly stressed for boys. Young boys may be given away any time after the age of six or seven to a Koranic mallam for a year or two, to live and travel with him, work for him, and live in abject poverty, in order to learn Arabic prayers, and some Arabic script. Their relationship to him while under his tutelage is expressed in the Kanuri saying "mallamun abanun kozina" (your mallam exceeds your father). In other words, an individual's Koranic teacher exceeds his father in fatherly qualities, which means he must be given respect, obeyed and sub-